

State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

October 22, 2008

Dear Superintendent:

I am pleased so many superintendents from across the State were able to join me for the State of Education address on September 18. By working together, we can make sure that education remains Wisconsin's top priority. Access and equity in public education are not only moral and social justice issues, they are an economic imperative. We must work together to ensure citizens of Wisconsin understand the PK-12 education system is the foundation for all future workforce development.

As I highlighted in my State of Education address, quality education begins with early childhood and includes:

- Rigorous and relevant academic standards aligned with postsecondary and workforce expectations;
- World languages starting in elementary school;
- Respect for heritage and tribal languages;
- A strong emphasis on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM);
- The arts, gifted and talented, career and technical, and international education;
- And, meaningful connections between education and the working world, including service learning, youth apprenticeship, and guidance for students as they prepare career pathways.

My budget request reflects these fundamental elements of quality education.

Wisconsin's business community tells us they need high school graduates who are creative and innovative; can think critically, identify and solve problems; have communication skills; are responsible and ethical; and understand other cultures and perspectives. As I work collaboratively with business leaders throughout the State, I hear a resounding call for local school districts to work together with regional economic and workforce development initiatives to implement career pathways and provide educational opportunities that prepare students for jobs of the 21st Century. All students, whether they are preparing for postsecondary education or entering the workforce upon graduation, must have access to career planning and guidance that includes instruction in career decision-making and economic and workforce realities.

For our Wisconsin economy to be strong in this 21st century, our students and our schools must be world ready. In this 21st Century, we must graduate every child world ready.

I would remind you that school district Education for Employment Plans, s.121.02 (1)(m), defined in PI 26, fully developed in September 2004, will be due for a comprehensive 5 year review and revisions by September 2009.


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As you begin the process of program review and updating, remember that the Education for Employment plans can provide a blueprint for working with regional economic and workforce development groups and should be aligned with the models for developing programs of study/career pathways. School boards are encouraged to develop strong business and education partnerships and coordinate the E4E program with other school districts, CESAs, technical colleges, colleges and universities, and workforce and economic developments groups.

Through collaboration we will strengthen support for public education and expand our ability to develop strong work-based learning opportunities, STEM career academies, youth apprenticeship, and service learning and other opportunities that enhance educational experiences and align with workforce needs.

If you have questions or would like assistance from the Department of Public Instruction as you update your Education for Employment plan, please contact Sharon Wendt, Director Career and Technical Education, at sharon.wendt@dpi.wi.gov or 608.267.9251.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Burmaster', written in dark ink.

Elizabeth Burmaster
State Superintendent

EB/dm